

VZCZCXR05674
OO RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #0365/01 0430903

ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 120903Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1669
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 0206
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0337
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1627
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0279
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0296
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0499
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0254
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0358
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1960
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0816
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 0175
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 2116
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY 0100
RUEHN/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1174
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 9612
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 5981
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0320
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0559
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 2052
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0113
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 7691
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0734
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0275
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 6043
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 8436
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 9712
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 6646
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFSS/USFJ PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 8315

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000365

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ELA SOMERSET, IRWIN, AND MONZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2018

TAGS: PREL PHUM KDEM EFIN EINV LE SY JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN UNABLE TO PROVIDE MUCH ASSISTANCE ON LEBANON

REF: A. STATE 10786

1B. 07 TOKYO 4374

1C. 07 TOKYO 3078

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Other than public statements in support of the Lebanese government, Japan is unable or unwilling to take further steps at this time to support Lebanon. Funds are not available for the Special Tribunal, Lebanon does not qualify for Japanese official development assistance (ODA), the provision of assistance to Lebanese security forces is prohibited by Japan's constitution, and Japan is hesitant to jeopardize its "normal" bilateral relations with Iran and Syria by speaking out against them in the absence of more concrete evidence of troublesome behavior. Japan has no plans to send or receive high-level delegations to or from Syria and will notify us in advance if such visits become possible. Finally, Japan will not impose economic or financial sanctions against states, individuals or institutions undermining Lebanon's sovereignty without a Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolution. However, Japan's views toward Syria have hardened somewhat as Tokyo closely

examines possible links between Damascus and the DPRK. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Japan fully supports efforts to stabilize Lebanon and to bolster the government of Prime Minister Siniora, according to MOFA First Middle East Division Principal Deputy Director Akihiro Tsuji, who told Embassy Tokyo Political Officer that Middle East and African Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Shinsuke Sugiyama had held productive talks on Lebanon earlier this month in Washington with NEA DAS Gordon Gray and NEA/ELA Director Abercrombie-Winstanley. According to Tsuji, Japan's major priority in the region is to advance the Middle East Peace Process in line with the President's Annapolis initiative. Much hard work remains to be done to realize an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord by the end of the year, and events in Lebanon are only likely to complicate matters, he explained. But while taking the issue of Lebanon and Syria quite seriously, Japan lacks the leverage to do much in the case of either country, he asserted.

13. (C) Tsuji then reviewed Japan's response to each of the items contained in ref A demarche:

-- The Tribunal: Japan agrees that it is critical that the Tribunal be established as soon as possible and understands the need for funding. However, despite the efforts of his division to lobby for such funds, none are forthcoming given competing priorities and a shrinking ODA budget. Earlier efforts to identify Japanese judges to serve on the Tribunal

TOKYO 00000365 002 OF 003

(ref B) came to naught when the Ministry of Justice was unable to identify "qualified" candidates to put forth. Tsuji admitted that one problem was finding judges willing to

SIPDIS
serve abroad.

-- Economic Assistance: Repeating the same position we have heard on previous demarches seeking aid for Lebanon, Tsuji noted that Japan's ODA program is criteria-based, and as Lebanon's per capita GNP exceeds USD 4,000, Lebanon would not qualify for ODA even if funds could be found in the shrinking assistance budget. While Japan has been able to find small amounts of funds for humanitarian relief in Lebanon in the past year, such funds cannot be used to cover foreign debts. (NOTE: Japan contributed USD 700,000 in emergency grant aid last July through the UN Relief and Works Agency for humanitarian assistance for Palestinian refugees affected by the fighting at the Nahr El-Eared refugee camp. In addition, Japan contributed approximately USD 11 million in the aftermath of last year's conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in South Lebanon. END NOTE.

-- Military Assistance: Japan is prohibited by law from providing assistance to foreign militaries.

-- Strong Statements in Favor of Lebanon's Government: Japan is prepared to make such statements, confirmed Tsuji, who said the most recent such statement was issued in November concerning the stalled presidential election. Political officer urged Tsuji to press for more frequent statements, particularly following violent incidents aimed at the government and its supporters. (NOTE: MOFA issued a press statement condemning the assassination of MP Walid Eido, his son, and others last June. END NOTE.) Tsuji noted that Japan was prepared to strongly support Prime Minister Siniora last year during his planned visit to Tokyo, and was disappointed when the visit had to be canceled at the very last minute. Siniora's invitation to Tokyo remains open, but Japan realizes it will be difficult for him to travel.

-- Statements Condemning Syria and Iran: Tsuji said this would be very difficult to do, given the fact Japan enjoys and hopes to maintain "normal" bilateral relations with both

countries, and in the absence of "concrete evidence" of troublesome behavior by either country. Political Officer argued that Iranian and Syrian support for elements opposed to Lebanon's moderate government are self-evident, but Tsuji responded that more would be needed before Japan would openly condemn either Damascus or Tehran.

-- Senior Level Travel: Tsuji said there are currently no plans to receive any high-level Syrian delegations, nor are there any plans to send such a delegation to Damascus. However, Japan believes in maintaining dialogue. When Senior Vice Foreign Minister Katsuhito Asano visited Damascus last

TOKYO 00000365 003 OF 003

June, the Japanese had been careful to consult with the Department in advance and Asano had delivered a strong message to Syrian President Asad to moderate his behavior (ref C). If high-level visits are to be contemplated in the future, Tokyo will again notify us in advance, Tsuji said.

-- Financial Sanctions: Japan will not impose financial sanctions in the absence of a UN Security Council resolution pursuant to Chapter VII, similar to those enacted against Iran, according to Tsuji.

¶4. (C) Despite Japan's desire to maintain "normal" relations with Syria, Tsuji confided that since reports of possible collusion between Syria and the DPRK have surfaced, MOFA is taking a much more critical and careful look at relations with Damascus. In the past, policy decisions concerning Syria could pretty much be made by the First Middle East Division. Now anything to do with Damascus ends up on desks much higher in the Ministry, he said.

SCHIEFFER